

The introductory material includes articles on the history of research on Himalayan plants written by Prof. Hideaki Ohba on pages 4–7, geobotany of the Himalaya on pages 8–11, and a map of the whole Himalaya. On pages 12–25 are 34 topographical maps. Botanical guides to the areas of the Himalaya are on pages 26–32. An analysis of the horizontal and altitudinal distribution patterns of the plants covered in the book is on pages 33–39 and adaptive strategies of alpine plants in the Himalaya are covered on pages 40–43. Himalayan plants in the Hengduan mountains of southwest China are discussed on pages 44–45.

Although the book is in Japanese, the high quality and detail in the photos make the diversity of the flora and vegetation in this unique and highly diverse area easy to comprehend. The number of individual taxa included for each genus provides a good sense of the range of diversity within large genera. Some examples: *Arisaema*, 17; *Astragalus*, 24; *Gentiana*, 33; *Impatiens*, 22; *Leontopodium*, 10; *Meconopsis*, 21; *Pedicularis*, 66; *Rhododendron*, 58; *Saxifraga*, 66; *Saussurea*, 40.

The book is beautifully bound on high quality paper and one of the nice features is that the pages lie flat when the book is opened at any page. Rumor has it that an English language edition is being considered.—David E. Boufford, *Harvard University Herbaria*, 22 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-2020, U.S.A., david_boufford@harvard.edu.

Two British Orchid Books

ANNE and SIMON HARRAP. 2005. **Orchids of Britain and Ireland: A field and site guide.** (ISBN 0-7136-6956-X, pbk., durable field guide binding). A & C Black, 38 Soho Square, London, W1D 3HB, U.K. (**Orders:** +44 (0)20 7758 0200 customerservices@acblack.com; <http://www.acblack.com/search.asp>). £29.99 (\$51.95 US), 480 pp, 360 color plates, numerous watercolors, line art, 49 maps, glossary, bibliography, index, 21.6 × 13.8 cm.

MICHAEL FOLEY and SIDNEY CLARKE. 2005. **Orchids of the British Isles.** (ISBN 0-9541916-1-7, hbk.). Griffin Press Publishing Limited, 35 Wessex Way, Cox Green, Maidenhead, SL6 3BP, UK (**Orders:** <http://www.griffinpress.co.uk/orchids.htm>). £45 (\$78 US), 390 pp., extensively illustrated with color photographs; 50 maps, glossary, bibliography, index, 27.6 × 20.5 cm.

It is not often a reviewer has the opportunity to review two publications that cover the same subject and are published at the same time. This is the situation with both books on the orchids of the British Isles. Each book covers the ± 60 species known from the British Isles. Both books are packed with full-color photographs, maps, technical details, and similar information. Yet they are as different from each other as apples and oranges. While Foley and Clarke's large format book (published in association with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh), contains the more technical information, the Harraps' work is designed as a field guide—and that it very much is. As a field guide the binding is a durable Flexibind type that is sown and opens flat at any given point. To call it a paper binding is an injustice. The photographs in *Orchids of Britain and Ireland* are meticulous and sharp in every detail. Although both books use the maps from *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora* those reproduced in the Harraps' book are much easier to read owing to the fact that the distributional dots representing county records for specific time segments are in red, black, and green as opposed to those in Foley and Clark that are in graduated shades from black to grey to red to pale pink. The wealth of information that appears in both books is very complete and covers every possible aspect of the orchids including their taxonomy, with extensive notes on more than 50 subspecies, varieties, and forms; distributional information; ecology, and status. Synonyms are included, although in a slightly different format in each book. In *Orchids of Britain and Ireland* the Harraps go even further and detail the

history of the known populations and their current status. Both books treat the genera *Dactylorhiza* and *Epipactis* in great detail and make every effort to sort out the species, subspecies, and varieties—no simple task! It is not surprising that the bibliography and glossary are similar in each work.

Given that both books cover much of the same information what does one book have that the other does not?

Foley and Clarke @ £45

covers 55 species
more extensive historical information
superior chapter on orchid taxonomy
checklist of species
authors names with the species
photographic hints
keys to the genera and species of selected genera
chapters by guest authors on cultivation and conservation

Harrap @ £29.99

covers 56 species
extensive specific information for seeking the orchids (44 page site guide to 330+ places to see orchids)
easier to read distribution maps
chart for each species showing decline over the years
convenient field guide format
growth pattern graphics of several genera
comparative plate of the bee orchids, *Ophrys*, of Europe

Both books use the term variety in the sense of forma—color and growth forms and both are guilty of the misuse of the term albino. A true albino plant has no coloring other than white-stems, leaves, and flowers. What is usually meant is white-flowered form often with the name *albiflora*. Although it is the only publication of the two with keys for identification, Foley and Clarke is by no means a field guide and the size limits its use as such. Having a copy of both books would be ideal. Use the Harraps in the field and then when returning home consult Foley and Clarke for confirming or additional information. The photographs in both books are excellent, but in Foley and Clarke many of the full-page images have blurred. I feel certain the original images were sharp but they were enlarged just a bit beyond their limits. The only noticeable errors I found in Foley and Clarke. The first, under *Spiranthes romanoffiana* was simply information taken from an old source: that of *Spiranthes {x}steigeri* being a hybrid between *S. romanoffiana* and *S. cernua*. It is not been viewed as such for over 25 years. *Spiranthes {x}steigeri* is a synonym for *S. ochroleuca*. Information under *Pseudorchis albida* stating that it occurs in North America from the east to Alaska is incorrect. The species, as *P. straminea*, is restricted to northwestern Newfoundland and a single site in western Quebec on the shore of Hudson's Bay. Both facts could have been easily found in *Flora of North America*.

Biographical information is given for both Foley and Clarke and their guest authors but none for the Harraps. It would have been nice to know a bit about them and their other work. All four primary authors should be congratulated on their work as these two books are a major contribution to the 21st Century's knowledge of wild orchid in the British Isles and are heartily recommended for both the novice and professional alike. If you are visiting the British Isles for an orchid hunting expedition the Anne and Simon Harraps' field guide will be especially useful.—Paul Martin Brown, author, *Wild Orchids of Florida, The Wild Orchids of North America, Wild Orchids of the Southeastern United States*, 10896 SW 90th Terrace, Ocala, FL 34481, U.S.A., naorchid@aol.com.

Orchids of Mexico

E. HÁGSATER, M.Á. SOTO ARENAS, G.A. SALAZAR CHÁVEZ, R. JIMÉNEZ MACHORRO, M.A. LÓPEZ ROSAS, and R.L. DRESSLER. 2005. **Orchids of Mexico**. (ISBN 9-6878-8908-X, hbk.). Published by Instituto Chinoín, A.C., Mexico City. Spanish and English versions available. (**Orders:** redactamex@yahoo.com.mx; Redacta, S.A. de